

Fact Sheet

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior



Padre Island National Seashore

Superintendent Mark Spier

Important Dates

September 28, 1962: Padre Island National Seashore is established
April 6, 1968: Ladybird Johnson dedicates the park
January 1970: Park facilities officially open
December 31, 1970: Cattle grazing in the park ends
Summer 1978: Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Restoration and Enhancement Program is created to increase nesting and reestablish a nesting colony of this native species; the transfer, incubation, and imprinting of approximately 2,000 Kemp's ridley eggs per year begins
August 9, 1980: Hurricane Allen (Category 3) hits
January 1986: Malaquite Pavilion closes due to delayed Hurricane Allen damage
Summer 1986: Sea turtle nesting patrols begin
Summer 1988: The transfer, incubation, and imprinting of approximately 2,000 Kemp's ridley eggs per year ends
July 1989: New Malaquite Beach Pavilion opens
May 1996: The first nesting Kemp's ridley female known to be part of the Restoration and Enhancement Program is documented
August 22, 1999: Hurricane Bret (Category 3) hits
April 2007: The importance of the park to shorebirds is recognized when it becomes part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Laguna Madre Wetland Complex
April 22, 2010: The largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history occurs in the Gulf of Mexico
Summer 2012: Kemp's ridley nesting in Texas peaks at 209 documented nests
Summer 2014: Kemp's ridley nesting in Texas drops to an 8-year low

Size and Habitat

203 square miles (526 square kilometers)
130,000 acres (52,609 hectares) of land and water, including 29 rookery islands and 70 miles of undeveloped sandy beaches
80-90% of the area behind the Gulf primary dune line, across to the Laguna Madre, is comprised of a rich variety of coastal prairie grasslands and wetlands, including estuarine emergent wetlands, freshwater ponds, wind tidal algae flats, Laguna Madre intertidal zone, lagoonal sea grass beds, and salt marshes

Visitation

2013: 515,831 visitors, 42,492 campers
Economics: In 2013, the 515,831 visitors to the park spent \$20.976 million in nearby communities, supporting 279 jobs in the local area
Record visitation: 972,122 visitors in 1991
Entrance fee: \$10.00/vehicle for 7 days or \$20.00/year

Education

October 2013-September 2014: 462 programs, including 391 in the park and 71 at local schools, conducted by park staff; 14,446 students participated
Through a partnership with Sharkathon, the park covered transportation costs for 18 school field trips that brought 1,500 students to the seashore at no cost

NPS Staffing

Permanent: 45 (Variable)
Temporary (term): 8 (Variable)
Temporary (seasonal): 37 (Variable)
Volunteers: 1,583 volunteers contributed 21,914 hours from October 2013-September 2014

Camping

Camping is permitted in 5 areas. No reservations (first come, first served).
Camping in the park is limited to 14 days at one time and 56 total days per year.
No hookups. A potable water filling station and a black/gray water dumping station are available for all RV campers.
Malaquite Campground: 48 sites (42 RV or tent, 6 tent only), RVs up to 40'x18'. Paved parking, picnic tables, restrooms, cold-water showers, dumpsters, recycling. Maximum of two tents, two vehicles, and eight people per site. Camping fee of \$8.00/night (\$4.00/night with a Senior or Access Pass).

Bird Island Basin Campground: 40 sites (34 RV or tent, 6 tent only), RVs up to 45'x16'. Gravel parking, vault toilets, dumpsters, recycling. Maximum of two tents, two vehicles, and eight people per site. Area use fee of \$5.00/day (\$2.50/day with a Senior or Access Pass) or \$10.00/year.

North Beach: Primitive camping with no facilities and no designated sites. Requires driving on the beach at your own risk. No camping fee.

South Beach: Primitive camping with no facilities and no designated sites. Requires driving on the beach at your own risk. No camping fee.

Yarborough Pass: Primitive camping with no facilities and no designated sites. Requires driving on the beach and across a deep sand pass at your own risk. No camping fee.

Other Facilities

Main Paved Road: 5.5 miles (8.85 kilometers)
Drivable Beach: 64 miles (103 kilometers)
Bird Island Basin: Boat launch, windsurfing and kayaking concessions
Malaquite Beach and Pavilion: Visitor center, camp store, restrooms, cold-water showers, observation decks, picnic tables and structures, accessible boardwalk, beach wheelchairs, trash cans, dumpsters, recycling. No pets are allowed on Malaquite Pavilion or on the beach directly in front of the Pavilion. Leashed pets are allowed everywhere else in the park.
Malaquite Pavilion Parking Area: Vault toilets, pet-friendly cold-water rinse showers, picnic shelter for large groups, dumpsters, pet-friendly beach access trails.

Climate

Average summer temperature: High 80s to low 90s° F (27-32°C)
Average winter temperature: 60s°F (15°C)
Average annual precipitation: 28.5 inches (72.4 centimeters)
Year-round: High humidity and breezy conditions

Wildlife and Plants

Birds: 397 species, including 14 federally endangered or threatened
Terrestrial Mammals: 62 species
Reptiles: 48 species, including 5 federally endangered or threatened
Molluscs: 37 species
Crustaceans: 41 species
Plants: 140 species, including 27 grasses, 15 grasslike, 92 forbs, 3 cacti, and 6 woody species

Sea Turtles

Five of the world's seven sea turtle species are found in the park
More Kemp's ridley nests are found in the park than at any other location in the U.S.
The park provides vital year-round habitat for juvenile green sea turtles
1996-2014: 1,655 Kemp's ridley nests containing a total of 155,259 eggs found in Texas
1996-2014: Over 130,000 Kemp's ridley hatchlings released in Texas
Summer 2014: Over 11,000 people attended 24 public sea turtle hatchling releases
Record number of Kemp's ridley nests documented in Texas: 209 in 2012
Record number of cold stunned green turtles found in Texas: 1,663 in 2011

Interesting Facts

The park protects the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world
Four nations have owned Padre Island (Spain, Mexico, Republic of Texas, United States)
Malaquite Beach is named for the Native American Malaquitas Tribe
The Spanish shipwrecks of 1554 found in the park are among the oldest shipwrecks in the U.S.
Cattle ranching occurred on Padre Island from 1804 until 1970. Novillo Line Camp preserves the last remaining structures from that ranching history
Padre Island is named for Padre José Nicholas Balli, a Spanish priest who established the first permanent settlement on the island
Bird Island Basin is one of the top windsurfing destinations in the U.S.
White-tailed deer are the largest terrestrial mammals in the park. Their populations have increased over the last 25 years, with groups of up to 20 observed in remote areas of the park.
The original name for Padre Island was "La Isla Blanca" which means White Island
Mansfield Channel, at the southernmost boundary of the park, was dredged in 1962 but was destroyed by a hurricane less than a year later, then dredged again in 1967
The Laguna Madre is one of six hypersaline lagoons in the world
Ridley Ranger, a Cairn terrier, has been trained to find Kemp's ridley nests and has done so successfully since 2006

More Information

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